

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission

ITEM

20

DECISION

TOPIC

Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program

Commission approval is requested for the committee recommendations for the Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant (NRBBOG) Program. A total of \$237,500 was appropriated from the DNR Environment First Fund for the development of project related to natural resource based business opportunities; an additional \$12,500 was made available to the Department to administer the program, for a total appropriation of \$250,000 for this program. Local Resource Conservation and Development boards sponsored by county governments or Soil and Water conservation Districts were eligible to receive funding on a competitive basis that the application identified a dollar for dollar or in-kind match.

The Commission approved funding for 11 projects from the first grant cycle totaling \$187,900 at the September 11, 2008 meeting. The Department provided another opportunity to apply for non-obligated funds from this grant cycle and any unexpended funds under the program to date in January 2009.

The Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program Review Committee Consisting of Cali Beals (Iowa Department of Economic Development), Lyle Asell (DNR – Director’s Office, and Aron Flickinger (DNR – Forestry Bureau) convened on January 21, 2009, to review 13 additional RC&D projects requesting \$255,768 in funding. Based upon a competitive scoring system that encourages local economic development involving Iowa’s natural resources and considers impact on the environment with measurable results and well define benchmarks during the life of the project, the Department requests approval of the grants listed below (see attached summary description for each project):

Successful Projects in Cycle B		Grant Award
Northeast Iowa RC&D	The Trout River Energy Auditor Project	\$6,562
Chariton Valley RC&D	Keutzer Sawmill Fuel Pellet (Supplemental)	\$9,775
Prairie Winds RC&D	Invasive Tree Management Services of North Iowa	\$11,250
Northeast Iowa RC&D	Developing Historic Forest Resources as a Business Opportunity (Supplemental)	\$18,500
Limestone Bluffs RC&D	Maquoketa Art Experience	\$12,000
Iowa Heartland RC&D	Realizing the Technology Transfer Potential of Green and Main.	\$25,000
Total		\$83,087

The projects described in the table below represent the unsuccessful grant applicants. They are provided for the Commission's information but are not recommended for funding at this time.

Unsuccessful Projects in Cycle B		Grant Request
Geode RC&D	Mississippi River Duck	\$25,000
Golden Hills RC&D	Western Skies Scenic Byway Natural Resources Inventory	\$20,650
Iowa Lakes RC&D	Building Capacity for Natural Resources in NW Iowa	\$3,150
Iowa Lakes RC&D	Historic Preservation as a Natural Resource Economic Development and Sustainability Tool	\$5,000
Northeast Iowa RC&D	Exploring Northeast Iowa's Natural Resources (Supplemental)	\$7,500
Prairie Partners RC&D	Fresh Connections Local Food Cooperative	\$5,094
Cedar Valley RC&D	Nashua Welcome Center Kiosk	\$5,000
		\$161,081

Paul Tauke, Forestry Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division
March 12, 2009

Attachment: NRBBOG Summary Descriptions

Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program 2008 Summary Descriptions

The Trout River Energy Auditor Project – Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is working with the Iowa League of Resource Conservation and Development, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development councils to improve energy efficiency in Northeast Iowa through residential and on-farm energy audits. This project will utilize \$6,562 in NRBBOG funds and a cash match of \$14,330.

Keutzer Sawmill Fuel Pellet - Chariton Valley RC&D will continue to work with Keutzer Sawmill with these supplemental funds. The original pelletizer researched to do the job for this project did not perform as promised, creating the need for a much more expensive pelletizer. These funds will enable purchase of the equipment and still allow for marketing and outreach. This project will use \$9,775 in NRBBOG funds in addition to the original grant.

Invasive Tree Management Services of North Iowa – Prairie Winds RC&D (Cerro Gordo County) will establish a business to assist private and public land managers in North Central Iowa with the control of invasive woody vegetation and trees on native prairies, restored

prairies, grasslands, pastures, and other wildlife habitat. This project will utilize \$11,250 in NRBBOG funds and provide \$80,000 in cash match.

Developing Historic Forest Resources as a Business – Northeast Iowa RC&D will continue to work with Glenwood Log Houses to establish a new historic log house construction business. This project will utilize \$18,500 in NRBBOG funds in addition to the original grant.

Maquoketa Art Experience – Limestone Bluffs RC&D (Maquoketa) will hold seasonal artist workshops focusing on landscapes, scenery and wildlife of east-central Iowa. This project will utilize \$12,000 of NRBBOG funds along with a cash match of \$12,000.

Realizing the Technology Transfer Potential of Green and Main – Iowa Heartland RC&D (Des Moines) will work with Indigo Dawn to renovate a 90-year old brick building as a model to demonstrate the most comprehensive green restoration practices available for existing buildings in Iowa. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds along with cash match of \$33,000 and an in-kind match of \$40,000.